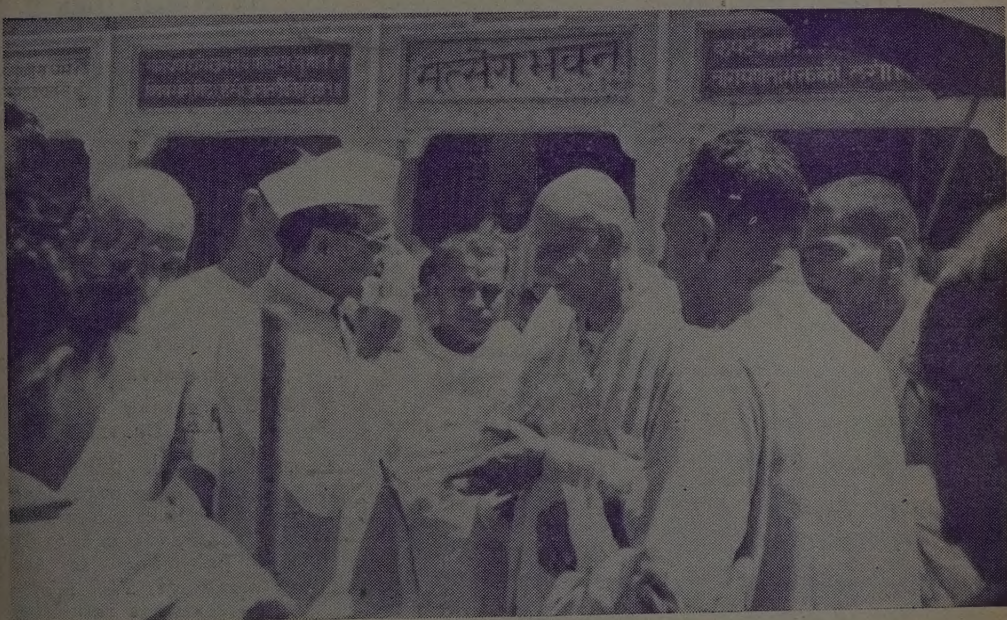


The Divine Life

Monthly Journal of The Divine Life Society



Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj receives Sri Gulzarilal Nanda, Union Minister for Planning and Power and Irrigation, (left of the centre with Candhi cap) who visited the Ashram on April 11, 1956.

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3rd 1st June 1956

Sri Dr. Sivananda Chellammas
Madras.

Peaceful, auspicious and beautiful, radiant, ever pure and immortal is the nature of the inner consciousness, the Atman that pervades all creation.

To realise this inner consciousness is the essence of spiritual life.

Eliminate all that is negative and develop all that is sublime, and good.

May Lord bless you, Sivananda

RELIGIOUS CALENDAR

[Sivanandanagar]

(16th June to 15th July, 1956)

June

17/18 Ganga Dassara

19 Ekadasi (18th in

South Indian
calendar)

20 Pradosha Puja

22/23 Purnima

30 Poor-feeding Day

July

3 Eighth Anniversary
of the Yoga-Vedanta
Forest University

4 Ekadasi

5 Pradosha Puja

7/8 Amavasya

15/16 Beginning of the
Dakshinayana

PLEASE NOTE

The views expressed in the contributions that are received from outside and published in the columns of *The Divine Life* are always representative of the individual opinions of their respective authors without being exclusively confined to the editorial ken of the Ashram's Publication Division. —ED.



DIVINE LIFE

Volume Eighteen

June, 1956

Number Six

Four Kinds of Consciousness

Sri Swami Sivananda

(Text of a Discourse)

There are four types of consciousness,—consciousness, subconsciousness, super-consciousness and double consciousness.

Consciousness means Prajna. There is physical consciousness. One is conscious of one's body and one's surroundings—the visible objects of this universe. In mental consciousness one feels the operations of the mind, one's sentiments, thoughts and feelings. Very few people have got mental consciousness. They have got only consciousness of the body (instinctive consciousness). It is only those who have got a subtle intellect, who have got some knowledge of psychology, who are practising a little bit of concentration, meditation and introspection, will be able to know about mental consciousness. (discriminative consciousness related to intellectual and emotional entities).

The Subconscious

Then comes the subconscious wherein all the Samskaras (impressions) are stored up. It is like a lumber room. From the subconscious, through memory, ideas come to the surface of the mind, to the conscious. The subconscious is called Chitta. In

Vedanta 'Chit' is pure consciousness, absolute consciousness, Brahmic consciousness, supreme consciousness. 'Chitta' is the subconscious, and Chit is Para Brahman.

You do an action. You desire an object and experience it. The experience goes to the subconscious mind. It remains there until you get a stimulus from the external world or from within through memory. Then the ideas and Samskaras come to the surface of the mind. Vasana (desire) becomes a Samskara and Samskara becomes a Vasana. Action produces an impression (Samskara) and impression goads you to repeat an action again. This is a vicious circle. There is no end for it. It is the Samskaras imprinted on the subconscious mind that force you to be reborn again. These Samskaras can only be destroyed by Knowledge of Brahman. Then alone you are free from birth and death and you become Jivanmukta or Mukta Purusha (liberated soul). You will have to be careful in producing impressions in the subconscious mind. Do good deeds. Have sublime divine thoughts. Do Japa and Kirtan. These will produce good Samskaras

and destroy the evil impressions. Be good and do good and practise meditation. You can generate good Samskaras in the subconscious mind. But even these have a binding effect on the soul. Finally, one has to renounce one's attachment to goodness also and transcend over it.

Superconscious State

Then we have got the superconscious state. That is the state of the Cosmic Reality, where there are neither names nor forms, neither darkness nor light, neither East nor West, neither any visible object, nor the least of the play of the senses. It is pure, absolute consciousness, consciousness *per se*. The goal of life is attainment of the superconscious state. It is called Nirvikalpa Samadhi, Asamprajnata Samadhi. We have to transcend the body and the mind and enter into the superconscious state through meditation. After equipping oneself with the four means one should practise Sravan (hearing of the sacred lore), Manan (reflection over them), and Nididhyasan (deep meditation). Then one will get Atma Sakshatkara.

Below the superconscious state, according to Raja Yoga, there are various kinds of Savikalpa Samadhis; in Vedanta also there are Savikalpa Samadhis. Savitarka, Nirviterka, Savichara, Nirvichara, Sa-ananda and Asmita are Savikalpa Samadhis according to Raja Yoga. Antardrishyanuvid, Antarabdanuvid, Bahya-drishyanuvid, Bahya-sabdanuvid are forms of Savikalpa Samadhi according to Vedanta. These are lower stages. In these, there is the consciousness of Triputi or triad—the knower, knowledge and the known—the seer, sight and the seen; and above these stages, there is Asamprajnata Samadhi, or Nirvikalpa Samadhi, or Nirbija Samadhi. There are no Vrittis, no Vasanas, no imagination, no Sankalpas, in that state. There is only pure consciousness. That is our goal. That is Para Brahman.

Double Consciousness

In double consciousness the sage rests in his own Swarupa, enjoying the supreme bliss, and at the same time he works for the good of the world in a perfectly detached manner. He is able to do so because he has double consciousness. He has not forgotten his own pure, Brahmic state and, at the same time, he has consciousness of the world. The Jivanmukta, resting in his own Swarupa, utilizes his taintless mind for serving humanity. If the mind is completely destroyed as in a Videha Mukta, he cannot work in this world. Then we will have no Jivanmuktas to teach the aspirants. In the Jivanmukta, a certain portion of Avidya remains, Satwic Vasana remains, called Lesha Avidya, where there is Swarupa Manonasa of the mind. But the whole mind is not destroyed. Rajas and Tamas are destroyed, but Sattwic egoism remains. It is through this that he beholds the world within himself. In a Videha Mukta the whole mind is destroyed. He is absorbed in Para Brahman completely.

Brahmakara Vritti

Through Sadhana, the aspirant raises the Brahmakara Vritti. He thinks: "I am Akhanda-Ekarasa-Chinmatra Brahman (I am the one, indivisible, homogeneous essence); I am Nitya-Buddha Swaroopa, I am Nitya-Bodha-Swaroopa, I am Nitya-Tripti Swaroopa (I am ever pure, I am pure consciousness, I am eternal satisfaction); I am Sat-Chit-Ananda Swaroopa (I am an embodiment of existence-knowledge-bliss)." In these words there is Achintya Sakti (unthinkable power), there is Ananta Sakti (infinite power). These thoughts destroy all Vishayakara Vrittis and raise the Brahmakara Vritti. Thought of Brahman alone remains. This Brahmakara Vritti destroys the original Avidya and the aspirant rests in his own Swarupa.

Intuition and Cosmic Consciousness

In Western philosophy they use the word 'intuition.' The understanding of the Western philosophers of the word 'intuition' is different from the understanding of intuition by the Eastern philosophers. Their intuition is not the same intuition conceived of by the Eastern philosophers. Intuition is a faculty, a higher wisdom, *Jnana-chakshus*, which Sanjaya and Arjuna had. Intuition sometimes refers to Para Brahman Himself, the Experience-whole. Intuition does not contradict reason. It fulfils it, and it transcends reason. It is the door or gateway to Para Brahman, to Knowledge of Brahman.

Above Cosmic Consciousness is Super-cosmic state. *Iswara* has got Cosmic Consciousness as well as Super-cosmic Consciousness. *Bhaktas* who go to *Satyaloka* and dwell with *Hiranyagarbha*, experience Cosmic Consciousness. They have got full knowledge of the process of creation of this world, of the *Tanmatras*, mind, *Mahat*. They have got experience of *Cosmos*. That is called Cosmic Consciousness.

Seven Stages of Wisdom

In Vedanta there are the *Sapta Bhumi-kes*, the seven stages of wisdom. They are *Subheccha*, *Vicharana*, *Tanumanasi*, *Sattwapatti*, *Asam-shakti*, *Padartha-bhavana* and *Turiya*. The first three stages are the preliminary stages. Desire for liberation is *Subheccha*. Enquiry into the nature of Brahman is *Vicharana*. When with a little practice of *Sadhana*, the mind is rendered "like a thread," freed from attraction and repulsion, when the mind has been thinned out, through *Viveka* and *Vairagya*, the state is called *Tanumanasi*. *Sattwapatti* is

the state when the mind is filled with *Sattwa*. It is the state of a *Jivanmukta*. There are four kinds of *Jivanmuktas* according to the degree of *Sattwic* ego present in them. *Sattwapatti*, *Asam-shakti*, and *Padartha-bhavana* are the progressive stages in which the mind melts more and more in Brahman. The highest state is *Turiya*. To some *Jivanmuktas* the world appears like a dream. To some other *Jivanmuktas* it appears like a deep void,— according to the *Sattwic* egoism present in them. Gradually the sage ascends the highest rung in the ladder of wisdom. In the last stage he has no knowledge of the world. He would not take food by himself. He has to be fed, if his body is to be kept alive. *Mouni Swami* of *Kumbakonam* was in the last stage. *Alakot Swami* had also this experience. They had no knowledge of this world. They were completely absorbed in their *Atman*. They had withdrawn themselves completely from the world-consciousness, whereas sages like *Janaka* had a slight awareness of the world. So *Janaka* was able to rule the kingdom. Those sages who work in this world with a slight feeling of this world of *Maya* are called *Vyavaharic* sages. Those sages who are absorbed in *Samadhi*, who cannot work for the well-being of this world, are called *Samadhi-leen* sages.

So let us get ourselves established in Para Brahman and enjoy the bliss of the Eternal and radiate joy and bliss to the world, and work for the welfare of all mankind. Through *Sadhana*, meditation, discipline, constant *Abhyasa* (practice) and *Vairagya*, may you all become *Jivanmuktas* in this very birth!

A Persian poet has compared the universe to an old manuscript of which the first and the last pages have been lost. It is no longer possible to say how the book began, nor do we know how it is likely to end. Ever since man attained consciousness, he has been trying to discover these lost pages. Philosophy is the name of this quest and its results.

—Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad

The World As a Sport of 'Chit'-Consciousness

The Late Dr. Hari Prasad Shastri

(Founder, Shanti Sadan, London)

The Vedanta as taught in the Upanishads and the Gita Sastra is not an intellectual gymnastic or an exercise of solitary meditation, divorced from the affairs of the world.

Sri Vasishtha has said that the world is a sport of 'Chit'-consciousness. There cannot be a more beautiful and philosophical description of this creation of Maya, called Samsara.

We have to keep our intellect united in identification-meditation on the substratum of the universe, Sat-chit-ananda, existence-knowledge-bliss absolute, but one of our chief duties is, as our holy ancestor Sri Vyasa has said, to serve mankind.

It is the spiritual service which is the crying need of the hour. There are many philanthropists, scientists, political reformers, but few who understand the world as the sport of the Lord and want to serve mankind by contributing to their upliftment from the bonds of Tamas and Rajas, to the eternal peace and illumination of identity of Jiva and Brahman.

The West is bubbling with physical and intellectual energy. The spirit of adventure here is remarkable. The heart of the West is not so materialistic as people think it to be. Unless the surplus energy of the West is devoted to creative spiritual channels, it will find expression in international wars and feuds, devotion to physical comfort and pleasure, and adherence to some kind of materialistic creed like Marxian communism.

Seers and savants, descendants of holy Rishis, I appeal to you to carry Vedanta all over the world and convince the people, intellectually as well as on the practical

plane, that human life has only one great object, and it is realization of God as the substratum of the world and the Indweller of all.

Vedanta is opposed to any kind of narrowness. If it is associated with any kind of national bigotry or racial superiority-complex, then it defeats its own purpose. Humanism is good, but it is a product of the renaissance and smacks of hidden materialism as we find in the teachings of Auguste Comte and his followers.

The Western philosophers from Descartes to Bertrand Russel have found no satisfactory solution to life. The poetry of Goethe to Robert Briges gives only glimpses of the universal truth of *sarvam khalvidam brahma*,—all this is God.

Fundamentally, the East and the West are not different from each other. Humanity is like a bird which must fly towards the blue of Devotion-Knowledge. The East and the West are like the two wings of a bird which must co-operate with each other on the spiritual as well as the intellectual and the aesthetic planes.

Holy ones, I appeal to you in all humility in my capacity as a student of Sri Sankara and a follower of the holy Sanatana Dharma to found an authoritative organization to spiritualize the whole mental and social structure of India, to root out the evils of materialism and every kind of narrowness, and also to give your serious attention to imparting the holy truth of the Gita to the West in a non-dogmatic and universal manner. This is the supreme task before the Pandits and Yogins of the holy Bharatavarsha.

Let us serve the Lord and delete our personal ego. It is better to die while serving this cause than to live in an imagined national glory or with an inflated pride in materialism. God in man invites our worship, and not destructive criticism.

My salutations to the One without a second who revealed Himself in the purified hearts of Vyasa and Sankara and in the beautiful and tranquil valleys of the holy Himalayas.

N.B. The above paper was sent by Dr. Hari Prasad Shastri on the occasion of the

World Parliament of Religions held at Sivnandanagar, Rishikesh, during the first week of April, 1953. Dr. Shastri, who founded the Shanti Sadan at London more than two decades ago, passed away in the beginning of this year, leaving behind him his priceless legacy of a number of scholarly and inspiring works on India's ancient spiritual lore including the English translations of "Panchadasi," "Valmiki Ramayana," and a few other old Sanskrit texts. Dr. Shastri was a lecturer in Indic and Oriental studies at the Universities of Shanghai and Tokyo before he went to London.

Science and Philosophy of Religion

Dr. A.C. Das, M.A., Ph.D.

(Calcutta University)

In this article I propose to discuss the relation, if any, between science and philosophy of religion; and before I can determine the relation between these important branches of human knowledge, I have to ascertain the sense in which the term "science" is to be taken. In India, the distinction between science and philosophy is quite clear and is as old as the Upanishads. In Indian terminology all empirical studies including science are called *apara vidya*, whereas philosophy is called *para vidya*, dealing as it does with the ultimate nature of existence. Philosophy is conceived of as *vidyasthanas* as well, meaning that philosophy is the fountainhead of the knowledge of the ultimate principle or principles. However, it is nowadays a commonplace belief that at the beginning of Western thought there was hardly any clear distinction between one branch of knowledge and another. In ancient Greece, the cradle of Western civilization, particularly at the start of Greek thought, there was no distinction whatsoever between science and philo-

sophy as we understand them to be today. It was indeed later that the mass of knowledge attained was differentiated into various branches of human study or pursuit.

Science and Philosophy

The word "philosophy" originally meant love or wisdom or truth, and as science in its origin was a search of the truth of things, there was naturally nothing to set science as a study against philosophy. We can say that in Greece, both philosophy and science originated and developed under the innate or initial urge of the human mind towards knowledge. So we find that Theles, the father of Western philosophy, and some other early Greek philosophers combined in them the scientist and the philosopher. Indeed, Plato and Aristotle, in the fifth and fourth century B.C., sought to clarify the distinction between science and philosophy. But they differed from each other in their conceptions. Plato formed in his own way his peculiar conception of science. According to him, science is knowledge of the realities, the ideas, and is in fact identical with

what is traditionally called metaphysics,¹ whereas the knowledge of the objects of Nature—the phenomena is opinion. What we today call science he calls the higher form of opinion. Aristotle, on the other hand, takes science as an empirical study of universal and necessary connections.² According to him, science starts with perception and proceeds to systematize the facts of experience; and he gives us quite a hierarchy of sciences including the science of logic and mathematics, showing thereby that science brings order to our ordinary knowledge and is therefore an ordered knowledge of things. Philosophy with Aristotle, however, is metaphysics, i.e., investigation of the first principles. These Aristotelian definitions of science and philosophy came to stay and commended themselves to the cultured circles for a long time.

Metaphysic of Religion

But despite the clarification the words "science" and "philosophy" or rather "metaphysics" received at the hands of Aristotle, they were since now and then much confused; and the confusion between the two words marked some writings even in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Bacon, for example, in one of his essays says that "a little philosophy inclines a man towards atheism." As we find, Bacon employs the term "philosophy" in the sense of natural science. By the term as he uses it all that he means is that a little scientific knowledge, that is to say, a little physics, a little chemistry, a little astronomy, and so forth, tends to upset one's mind. Some again wrote treatises on physical science under the title "natural philosophy."³

Anyway, with the progress of science, especially in the nineteenth century, science as the study of phenomena came to be clearly distinguished from philosophy or from metaphysics as investigation of noumena. In the recent past there has, of course, been much new development in the field of philosophy and in some quarters a new conception of philosophy itself is in vogue, namely, the conception of philosophy as analysis, particularly the logical positivists' conception of philosophy as analysis of scientific propositions. Here I cannot enter upon any discussion of this conception. Suffice it to say that the conception of philosophy as analysis of experience may have a bearing upon the speculative study of religion. For this paper I take the term "philosophy" to mean metaphysics; and here if I speak of philosophy of religion, I speak of it as a metaphysic of religion, in the sense that it studies the ultimate nature and basis of religion.

Metaphysical Data

There may nevertheless be a science to study religion, and we have already the science of religion as psychology of religion or as comparative religion which is the science and the history of religion. But the science of religion is an empirical study which does not or cannot penetrate beyond empirical data. The science of religion as a science is none the less on the same footing with the special social sciences—economics, politics, etc., even with the science of society. But the term "science" in this use only means ordered knowledge. Then every systematic study including philosophy and even philosophy

¹ *Republic*, tr. by Lindsay, 1923, J.M. Dent & Sons, London, p. 234.

² *Analytica Posteriora*, Book I, Chap. 32 (Ross's edition).

³ Cf. C.F. Roger, *Current Equivocation in Regard to Science*, *Hibbert Journal*, Vol. XLIV, p. 340.

of religion is a science. In that case the relation between science and philosophy is oversimplified. The fact, however, remains that while science in its narrow sense is empirical in outlook as well as procedure, in the sense that it derives its principles of explanation from the experience of facts, philosophy is speculative in the sense that it proceeds by way of analysis and reflective interpretation with the help of principles, concepts and categories that are derived from pure thinking, i.e., the thinking of the universal or the most abstract aspects of things. Now if the distinction we make between science and philosophy is valid, it seems that science is dead opposed to the philosophy of religion.

Conflict Between Science and Religion

The opposition we thus posit between science and philosophy of religion is reinforced by the fact that science as such, or better, physical science, is opposed to religion. History supports this view. At the advent of science, especially at its advanced stage in the nineteenth century, science came into conflict with Christianity. The scientists of the time were quite ignorant of religion or religious facts, whereas the clergymen were equally ignorant of science. So the so-called opposition between physical science and the Christian faith was just opposition between some scientists, on the one hand, and some Christian theologians, on the other. The scientists set Christianity at naught, only because some dogmas of Christianity, particularly the doctrine of Creation, came to be contradicted by the theory of evolution which held the world upside down for some time. But this is not all. There was also a severe attack upon religion as a phenomenon. Comte, for example, sought to explain it away as a figment of imagination, and

many others followed suit. There are by now many theories of religion. According to some religion is a projection of fear. According to some others, religion is nothing but sex, and so forth. Nowadays it has become something of a fashion with most scientists to repudiate religion. As the saying goes, good cometh out of evil. The scientists by their opposition to religion unwittingly inspired a revision and reformation of the doctrines of Christianity and also provoked a deep study of religion as such and of the religions.

Development of Christian Theology

We now discern a peculiar relation between science and philosophy of religion, namely, that philosophy of religion in modern times could not develop in the significant way it has developed except for science. I can make the point clearer by reference to the origin and development of Christian theology. As we know, Christianity as a religion was born and thrived in the Roman Empire. But in the beginning, this new religion was at a tremendous disadvantage, not for lack of organization or leadership within the religion, but because of constant opposition from the Imperial Authorities. In the early centuries of the Christian era the socio-religious condition of the Empire was rather peculiar. Judaism, an older religion, was indeed there along with the new religion. Besides, many cults from all sides found their way into the Roman countries. There was again the cult of Emperor-worship. People made of the Emperor a veritable god. They erected temples to him and offered regular worship to the statues (of him) installed in the temples; and it seems that the Roman Emperors enforced the cult as an instrument of Imperial policy. But of all people the Christians could not persuade themselves

to accept the Emperor as a god and burn incense before him. The Christians were therefore suspect in the Empire and the more so because they practised their faith in secret associations.

By the middle of the second century A.C., there were doubtless small islands of Christians all over the Empire. Now persecution of the Christians formed part of the policy of the Emperors. They more often than not demanded from the Church explanation of the articles of faith; and the leaders of the Church had to think out the whole content of their religion and write lengthy apologetics in answer to the charges from the Emperors. It is undoubtedly true that in the Church itself there arose a need for the clarification of the content of Christianity. But we cannot deny that speculation on Christianity as a new faith was stirred or stimulated more by the malignant Imperial opposition to the Church creeds than by anything else.

Interdependence of Science and Religion

Thus we see that what happened to Christianity as a religion in the past in Europe, has happened or is happening now to religion as a phenomenon the world over. It seems that scientists have made common cause with communists and other anti-religious people in attacking religion. While scientists seek to explain away religion as a projection of the human mind, communists affiliate religion to class-struggle which is, according to them, the main principle of social dynamics, and describe religion as the opium of the people—as a deliberate device for the ruling class to exploit the ordinary people.

At all events from the opposition between science and philosophy one may conclude that philosophy of religion is independent of science. But this view is not completely true. At the present stage of culture no human study can be

wholly indifferent to any other. In short, the different studies developed so far, more or less influence one another. The theory of evolution, for instance, was propounded by way of explaining some biological phenomena. But the evolutionary point of view has now entered into all the crannies of our culture, such as sociology, politics, geology, economics and even into psychology and philosophy. There is really one common atmosphere in which all these studies are developing. Philosophy of religion therefore cannot quite keep clear of the sciences, some of them at least.

Subjective and Objective Aspects

Religion as it is, is a social phenomenon. When we say this, all that we mean is that religion is a phenomenon which is scarcely to be found outside society, savage or civilized. Again religion has two sides, inner and outer, subjective and objective. The subjective side of religion consists of some relevant ideas, beliefs and feelings. Religion as an objective phenomenon, on the other hand, consists of some practices, rites and rituals. There is, however, no division between the subjective and the objective side of religion. The subjective and the objective side form just one unity, the objective side being an articulate expression of the subjective. There is no denying that the outward religious observances are not intelligible in the least without a reference to some inner facts. The religious practices are like the husk and the relevant inner fact or facts are like the kernel of a seed. Indeed the outward fact of religion embodies the idea of religion. In religious consciousness there is an inner symbolism which finds expression in some outer acts. In a way the inner, i.e., the subjective side is more important inasmuch as historically it is the inner aspect of religion that determines the outer.

Medium of Psychology

Psychology avowedly deals with mind in its manifold aspects. So analysis of religious consciousness falls within the scope of psychology, and psychology of religion is already a branch of the science of psychology. Discussion apart, at this stage we may say without fear of contradiction that religion is a human phenomenon and that religion as such takes its rise from human nature. In short, idea, feeling and volition mark religious consciousness. Ideas or beliefs about the deity, creation and all that are embodied in religious dogmas and doctrines and the corresponding feelings are expressed in religious practices or worship. It is extremely interesting how religious ideas and beliefs originate and, for that reason, how dogmas and doctrines are formulated in articulate language. In the study of religion in its content, philosophy of religion has doubtless to take advantage of psychological analysis. Psychology is therefore a presupposition of philosophy of religion. The philosopher who investigates religion must be a trained psychologist.

Some, however, make overmuch of psychology. They maintain that the philosophy of religion as a study is nothing more than a branch of the science of psychology. It is contended that philosophy of religion is to investigate only how religious consciousness and the different elements within it develop and that religious consciousness being an aspect of mind falls within the province of psychology. This is an extreme view and is based upon a confusion between the viewpoint of psychology and that of philosophy, even though they deal with much the same phenomenon.

We have indicated above that psychology is an aid to philosophy of religion.

We must have to clearly grasp this point. Psychology is after all a positive science; it only describes, but does not account for the things it investigates. As we say, psychology studies mind or consciousness in its structure and forms and also in its development. Psychology, nevertheless, does not or cannot explain the origin of mind or consciousness. Psychology of religion obviously starts with its subject-matter, the phenomenon of religion. It may, however, be retorted that psychology does not merely describe, but also explain the phenomena with which it is concerned.

It is true that some schools of psychology seek to account for the psyche or consciousness. But, as is well-known, they do not really explain; they only explain away the principle of consciousness. Much in the same way some schools of psychology seek to explain away the phenomenon of religion. But in these attempts of theirs these schools only stultify themselves. If mind or consciousness be nothing intrinsic and can be explained in terms of matter and mechanical forces or in terms of the organism, such a study of mind or consciousness, whatever we may call it is no psychology, which is by definition the science of mind or consciousness.

Philosophy of Religion

Truly speaking, philosophy of religion is concerned with interpretation and seeks to determine whether religion as a phenomenon can give us an insight into the ultimate nature of man and the world and into any basic relation between them. Philosophy of religion in its procedure nevertheless collects all relevant data furnished by some sciences. Psychology of religion is indeed one of these sciences the rest being sociology, archaeology and anthropology. Sociology has a direct bearing upon philosophy of religion

because of the fact that religion is as old as human society and that religion developed along with social development.

Archaeology deals with the relics of the past. Excavations all over the world have placed immense material at the disposal of researchers into the past. With the help of these, historians have been trying to reconstruct the earlier stages of civilization. Anthropology is comparatively a new science and is broadly the science of man and his culture. This science for the most part makes generalizations from the study of the existing savage people and societies. And quite a mass of facts regarding primitive customs, beliefs and practices, religious and other, have been brought to light by the explorers of the savage world. Philosophy of religion being concerned as it is with the question of the origin of religion must utilize the contributions of these sciences to the stock of human knowledge.

A Speculative Study

But it is not true that philosophy of religion is nothing but a study that only systematizes the results of these few sciences. A systematization on the part of philosophy of religion of the researches of these sciences is out of the question, firstly because philosophy of religion is no science in the strict sense of the term and secondly because philosophy of religion does not accept the data supplied by these sciences as final. I must say at the cost of repetition that philosophy of religion is a speculative study and is no science in the narrow sense of the term, which proceeds by way of observation, induction and deduction. Again though philosophy of religion may begin with the data supplied by some sciences, yet philosophy of religion proceeds by sifting out the relevant from the irrelevant, the meaningful from the meaningless and the absurd.

Moreover, philosophy of religion begins by negating the very scientific mode of explanation and by deprecating the attempt some anthropologists make to trace the developed organized religions to some primitive cults or customs.

The mechanical explanation of the more developed by the less developed is perhaps valid in the sphere where there is no essential difference between cause and effect. Therein an effect which appears rather complex is found on analysis to be a mere arrangement of some simple facts. Any mechanical whole is a case in point. A machine, say, an engine, is a whole. But, as we see, it comes about by an arrangement of some elements each of which was originally a fragment. However, the mechanical sort of explanation fails altogether in the case of the phenomenon called growth.

If we study an organism, human or other, we shall find that the organism as it stands now has developed out of a tiny seed. An oak as it exists now has come out of an acorn. But the process of growth or development remains unintelligible if we consider mechanical explanation the only possible explanation available to us. We do not quite see how the seed, soil, air, water and light can bring by their combined functioning a stately tree into existence. These causal conditions doubtless function and together. But the effect does not occur all at once. On the contrary, they give rise to the phenomenon of growth, in the sense that the tree, the final effect, takes shape only by some stages. So, if we want to understand the process of development, we have to fix upon the last step of the process at which we find the tree in its full and final form; and if we now look into this last step we understand the drift of the process of growth. We see that the tree in its

existence lights up the whole process, in the sense that it all shows that the tree is the end the process of growth aims at and finally achieves. But this end the seed by itself did not reveal. So here we reverse the very mode or explanation. We explain what precedes by what succeeds in the process; that is to say, we here adopt teleological explanation which consists in positing an end or purpose before the process of growth.

Now as regards religion, it might have had a very crude beginning. The beginning was indeed a seed with a core covered by the husk of some queer beliefs and primitive customs; and the core and what

it contained was increasingly revealed in the process of growth which culminated in organized religions with their articulate contents. Hence in order to solve the problem of the origin of religion as such we must have to go deep in our study of the existing religions. This is exactly the point of view of philosophy of religion. It, unlike the science of religion in the ordinary sense, undertakes a searching analysis of the contents of the developed religions and thereby bring out the essential nature and implication of religion as a human phenomenon, and precisely in this respect philosophy of religion transcends all science.

The Meaning of Religion

Sri Esme Wynne-Tyson

(United Kingdom)

The materialists are constantly telling us that religion is both the opium of the people and the means of governing them.

What religion, or the teachings of the greatest thinkers that the world has ever known, had degenerated to, might partially be described under one or both these headings. But what was intended by the original Teachers—the Founders of the Faiths—was obviously the exact opposite of these descriptions.

In every case, the aim of a major world-teacher was, in the first place, to clarify the mind of man about what was essentially true; in the second, and by that means, to teach him how to govern himself in order that he might be free from the tyranny of external discipline.

It is always the Commissar in man, not the Yogi, that seeks to dominate and govern others, the materialistic power-addict who sees the world as a territory needing himself and his theories as a tyrannous directive; and this is true

even though, and when, the Commissar is found in clerical clothing. It is always the refusal of men to accept the duty, burden, and privilege of self-discipline advocated by the Masters which leads to the dictatorship and tyranny of Church and State. For, by their refusal to be governed by their highest conscience, men themselves beget the conditions that necessitate external government. Their own lawlessness calls for the making and imposition of laws.

Regarding the chaos that always comes from lack of self-discipline the first thought that occurs to the onlooker is the need for control; and what should come from a man's inner root-nature has to be imposed from without, robbing him of his potential rights, character and dignity.

Aware of his own weakness, and yet unwilling to conquer it, man has to admit the need for external government, and uphold it; and this is the first step on the downward path to tyranny, and, even worse, the replacement of the spiritual

hypothesis as to the nature of man with the materialistic hypothesis which assures him of his dependence on externals, not only for civic rules but for every aspect and detail of his life.

Need For a Rational Outlook

Organized religion, which should have preserved the corrective idea, and maintained man's right and capacity to govern himself, has itself degenerated into a form of external government as jealous of its power as any system of State.

Nevertheless, religion, or rather, the exalted mental concepts upon which all the major faiths were originally based, still remains the hope of the world, and the only conclusive answer to dialectical materialism.

But in order to rediscover these concepts, which alone can save man from devolution and his world from dissolution, we must separate them from the disguising superstitions, myths and priest-made dogmas that have veiled their true nature. Religion must be rationalized and made realistic; for a little clear-thinking must surely convince us that in a world which tends to become more and more scientific, with inhabitants trained to think logically and reasonably, religion, which depends on faith rather than understanding, belief rather than knowledge (of science), must inevitably lose its hold on the minds of men, and, because of this fact, cease to be a power in their world.

This is the great peril that confronts humanity today, for unless religion is rationalized, it will perish; and if it perishes, with it will go man's last hope of evolution.

For when it is rationalized, true religion, religion based not on creeds and dogmas of the priesthood, but on the Divine Science of which we read in the Upanishads, and in the scriptures of many

other faiths as well as in the philosophy of Plato, provides mankind with its one and only means of evolving to a higher species. It is obvious that, for many millennia now, the human race has been in the state of the Centaur—half man, half animal—the equine portion maintaining its contact firmly with the earth, the frustrated human torso striving desperately towards the stars. To account for this painful dualism, many theories have been put forward. Probably no better diagnosis has been made of it than Paul's: "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

What we would, the highest aspiration of the human heart, has always been to rid ourselves of our animalism and to become wholly men, or Holy Men. When this desire consciously enters into any man, he has taken the first step on the evolutionary path. Unfortunately, the greater part of mankind have not taken this first step. They are still enduring, and taking as normal, the endless tug of war between what they usually term the higher and the lower instincts. In the majority of cases, the lower instincts have a habit of winning. All too often, we see evidences of "man" having given up the struggle and the animal nature all too evidently in charge. The torso has ceased to aspire; almost, it seems, it has ceased to live. Devolution has set in.

Avatars and Saviours

At the other end of the scale, there are a few men that others, in their ignorance of what is really happening, have called Avatars, Saviours, Redeemers, who have actually achieved the miracle of evolution while they walked the earth. They have, to all intents and purposes, put off the animal nature and have become

wholly man—a man who can know and say that "the spirit quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing;" "Brahman is all; all else is Maya." They have negated the animalism within. They have noughted the lusts of the flesh, and renounced all violence in their personal lives. No attachment, therefore, binds them to the animal life. They have become the *homo sapiens* that ordinary men fondly, but quite erroneously, imagine themselves to be.

Krishna, Buddha and Jesus are among the most notable of these evolved men. But there is a far greater number of "unknowns," and because they are unknown, the implication of their existence and achievement is lost to the world.

On the other hand, whenever the Evolutionist is known and his new stature has to be faced, the comparison between him and unevolved men seems too odious to be borne, and despite the persistent plea of the evolved men that all mankind should "follow them," they are, instead, deified and worshipped, and a thousand different theories are put forth to account for them and for their superior, purified and exalted characters.

This is, of course, partly because neither the priests who prosper by making themselves mediators between the people and the new "God"; in other words, by explaining Him to lesser minds by means of one theological theory or another, nor the congregations themselves, had, in pre-Darwinian times, any inkling of the evolutionary idea. The connection between visible man and the animals was still a mystery. Man's essential superiority was taken for granted even while he was sacrificing and slaughtering for food the lesser animals, and generally behaving like the worst sort of beasts of prey.

It is true that all organized religions,

all world-faiths, have held up some superior pattern, some great ideal—usually the concept of a perfect man—to whom their followers must aspire; but why and how they should aspire and what was the true nature of the ideal, has not been fully taught for the simple reason that the true explanation has rarely been perceived, or known.

Nevertheless, the fact that men, in exceptional cases, had evolved, had become beings so superior to the majority of mankind as to seem to be almost another species, remained as the hope of the world. They provided the ideal, the goal for the would-be Evolutionist and the concrete proof that the transition might be made.

They still provide that proof. Moreover, they provide the eternal answer to all forms of materialism which teaches that progress or evolution can only come about by the manipulation of external conditions, for their achievement rests squarely on the purification and expansion of mind. It was the quality of their thinking, and therefore of their acting and living, that made them what they were; and the mind of Christ, and the mind of Buddha remain in their teachings for everyone to read and emulate.

Spiritual Evolution

When we face this simple and scientific rationalization of the meaning of religion, we realize how misguided and misled the people have been who, instinctively feeling the "need" for religion, and having the conviction that it contained the answer to their problems and the way out of their sorrows and pains, have turned to the charlatans for enlightenment. The complicated and often pagan theological explanations given to them by a priesthood as ignorant of practical experience as those they set up to teach, merely

befogged them; and when enlightenment dawned, having surrounded religion with so many inventions, myths and mysteries born of their own imaginations and calculations, the priesthood naturally felt that the exposures of science which constantly discredited their theories were a menace to religion's very existence.

Neither they nor their followers seem yet to have perceived that it is because some theories are untrue, that they can be overthrown by science. All that is basically true in religion, the Divine Science, which is the real explanation of religion, being founded on spiritual fact, can never be in any danger from the theories of materialism; for the way of evolution is based on the achievement of those who have evolved just as positively as the atomic theory is based on the evidence of those who have split the atom.

Nevertheless Divine Science ascends even beyond the theory of evolution, which is always a three-dimensional term,

dependent on the space-time concept of life which is always four-dimensionally variable. For evolution presupposes a process of progress from one space-time point to another; whereas in the Eternal, all is complete. All is, and there is no becoming.

Consciousness, which constitutes man's true being, proveably contains, here and now, not only the mind of the average man but also the mind of Christ; and all men have access to consciousness, and therefore to the completed Ideal, whether one calls that the Atman, the Nous, the Archetype or the son of God. This fact makes spiritual evolution a present possibility instead of a distant aspiration.

Therefore we can say that whereas the absolute truth of Divine Science is the present existence of the Perfect Pattern which we see as *being made* by the process of evolution; and the Perfect Pattern includes the Perfect Man, the manifestation of Eternal Life.

Glimpses of My Acquaintance With Spiritual India

Prof. Jean Herbert

(Geneva University)

(Text of a Discourse given at the Sivanandashram in March, 1956)

Maharaj and Friends,

I have not come to India to teach or to speak. I have come to India to listen and to learn, because I feel that India, which has already taught so very much to the world through many centuries, which has given so much of her wealth of every kind to the rest of the world, still has much more to give. Her message has so far permeated only very small sections of the outside world. For the last quarter of a century I have made it my work to come periodically to India to sit at the feet of her sages and her saints to receive what little of their teaching I was capable of receiving. I know it was a very, very

small fraction indeed, but still I have done my best to carry that over to countries of the West by translating and publishing the sayings, writings, and teachings of the great sages and saints of India. Now I believe that the time has come to bring over still more to Europe more particularly, and this is why I have again come to India, and I hope, with God's grace, to come many more times to try to recieve a little more of the teachings of this holy land and to take it back.

Swami Sivananda

This is the first time I have the great privilege of coming so high up the Ganges

valley, to Rishikesh, and also of sitting at the feet of the great Master, the great Saint, who was so kind as to admit me in his presence, Swami Sivananda Saraswati. The Swami I have known for many, many years through correspondence, and I have read a great number of his writings which he has been so kind to send me very frequently. Of course, you all who constantly live in his presence, know his teachings, understand them, and what is still more important, apply them, far better than I can. So it would be preposterous of me to speak of his teachings, because everyone of you in this room can tell me much more than I could say myself. I should just like to mention one or two points which have impressed me and which have impressed many people in Europe, who like me, had not the privilege of seeing him before.

First of all, the fact—which was confirmed to me today again—is that Swamiji has not remained in the realm of the abstract or even of intellectual and spiritual teaching, but that at the same time, he has put into practice one of his great maxims 'Do good,' and I see with infinite pleasure today that the Ashram, although not rolling in wealth, as far as I can see, still manages to feed hundreds of people every day. I again heard the story today of the work that Swamiji has done for the lepers in this part of India, and many other instances. Now, so far to my knowledge, the great saints and the great sages of India in most cases have done either of the two: either they have given abstract spiritual teachings, or they have rather refrained from that and gone into social, practical work. Often it was the Master who gave spiritual teachings to his disciples, and the next generation after him went into social work, building hospitals, dispensaries, schools, doing famine and flood relief work, etc. Apparently one of the teachings which we can

take from Swami Sivananda is that both can be combined, and this is extremely important for us, Europeans, who attach so much importance, rightly or wrongly, to the visible, tangible, practical effects of the teachings.

Ethical Basis of Yoga

Another point that has struck me about the teachings of Swamiji is the great insistence with which he speaks and writes,—at least 'writes,' because I have not had the privilege of hearing him speak, but I understand that he speaks with very much insistence—on the ethical basis of Yoga: I might say the elementary starting point. Now in the West many people are attracted by Yoga, and I must say, the most vulgar forms of Yoga, the cheapest and the most dangerous. I believe if I could teach people a Yoga that would enable them to sit on a bed of nails, I should have thousands of people coming to learn it, but when you come to speak of high philosophy, people are not so much interested; and also, like many people in India, too (because that exists also in this country), they think that they can learn Yoga in one or other of its forms, straight-away, totally ignoring the ethical prerequisites.

One of the books I have published in French and German is Swami Vivekananda's *Raja Yoga*, in which, as you know, he takes up all the eight points of Raja Yoga in their regular order. But most people, I am sorry to say, just skip the chapters, referring to the first two points, Yama and Niyama, because they think that they know all about it, and this is nothing new for them. They want to go straight to what is new, what is interesting to them, and the result is that many of them start practising Asana, Pranayama and all the rest, often with the most disastrous results.

I have known personally a number of

people, and when I say a 'number,' it runs into several dozens, who have become insane or whose health was totally ruined by such practice of Hatha Yoga and Raja Yoga, because they ignored the ethical prerequisites. This is the reason why I am extremely glad that Swami Sivananda deals at great length on these and with much insistence, emphasizing the essential, basic, simple self-evident truths with which one must start any Yoga. I have met many people in Europe who have come under his influence through his writings, and possibly through correspondence, and I have so far not known of such cases of people losing either their mental or bodily health,—and I know how extremely difficult it is to correspond with a Master whom you have never seen, who lives on the other side of the world. This much I can say of what I have seen about the results of the teachings of Swami Sivananda in Europe, in the West.

I should not presume to say more, because anything else you know far better than I do, but just to sum up, as far as I have been able to judge, this influence has always been very good, exceptionally good and the *only* good, on all the people who have come into contact with him through his writings, who have followed his teachings and who have accepted him as their Guru.

Popular Insistence on Advaita

Now, since you have asked me to speak at greater length, perhaps I may say a word of what I feel the West could at present get from India in the way of Yogic and spiritual teachings. So far considerable insistence has been put on the Advaita Vedanta, and this was only natural, because the Westerners who have come to India have constantly ridiculed all your religious beliefs. They could find no words bitter enough, nasty enough, to speak of the cult

of Sri Ganesha, Ma Kali, Hanumanji, and many other personal forms of God, whom you worship in this country. For this reason, Indians who come to Europe have become extremely loath to speak of them, because they are afraid, and often rightly so, that people will laugh at them, despise them and just turn away in disgust. The result is that such Indians for more than one century have only been speaking of Sankara as the great teacher of Advaita.

In the West we like philosophy very much. We are all very proud of our intellect. We all believe that the intellect is the highest faculty in man and everything else is to be judged by it, rather by what little we may have of it. When Indians introduce Sankara's Advaita philosophy, it is a very fine, a very beautiful philosophy which everybody can respect. Whenever I ask a newly-met Hindu what school of thought he belongs to, he invariably replies, saying, "I am a follower of Sankara." But in ninety-nine out of hundred cases it is not true. After I have told him of my own opinion, my own respect for the Pauranic religious beliefs of India, then he generally comes out and tells me what his *Ishtha Devata* is and what it means for him. Now I believe that the time has come when Hindus can really speak of the worship of the personal God; and this is one reason why I was very glad to see that Swami Sivananda had published a book on the *Lilas of Sri Krishna*.

Sanskrit Scholars in Europe

For more than one century in the West your scriptures have been studied by very great Sanskrit scholars. We have had in Europe, and we are proud of it, Sanskrit scholars as good as you have in India, but for one thing, they are very few, and for another, they happen to be exclusively linguists, grammarians and philologists, and their interest in Sanskrit is about the

history of language and the relation between different languages, about etymology, comparative grammar, syntax and so forth, and in that they are extraordinarily scholarly. But it has come to a point when not only are they not interested in the substance of those scriptures, in the deep meaning, but they do not even suspect that there may be a deep significance, still less a spiritual message.

Need for Interpretation

This lasted until about fifteen years ago when apparently owing to the publication of the sayings and writings of modern sages of India, it began to dawn upon a number of people that after all the *Puranas* and the *Maha Bharata*,—not to speak of the *Upanishads* and *Brahma Sutras* and others—actually have a deep spiritual message. Now this idea has gone forward and when books are published expounding one interpretation or another, of the spiritual message and teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita* or of the *Kena Upanishad* or of some section of the *Maha Bharata*, people no longer just laugh it aside. They are surprised, of course, but they are interested; and I believe this is what India can at present give to the West.

Role of Advaita Philosophy

This does not mean that I am underestimating the value of Sankara's Advaita philosophy. His Advaita is a path, perhaps the highest path of all, but I cannot help remembering Sri Ramakrishna who knew what he was talking about when he said that there is not more than one or two men in a century who can follow it to the end. Even if this was also an underestimate, it means that it is not really for the masses. In spite of it, Advaita philosophy, to me, has a considerable and unique value. Its value is twofold. First of all it supplies a background, against which you may view your own religion, your own Sadhana,

your own philosophy, your own Yoga, your own beliefs, and owing to the very existence of that background you see that it is consistent, that it is logical, that it offers no substantial contradiction with any other path, and therefore, you need not quarrel with people who have different paths, you need not say that your own Sadhana is better and higher than others', but you can follow it efficiently, leaving others to do likewise. This is what I mean by saying that Advaita philosophy serves as a background.

It is also a safeguard against excessive, irrational and irresponsible excesses in the blind following of any one path, whether it is Bhakti Yoga or Raja Yoga or Tantra Yoga or Hatha Yoga. I believe, if you keep in mind the Advaita philosophy of Sankara, you are quite safe, and as a matter of fact, one thing which I never tire of repeating to Westerners is that Sri Sankara himself was a great Bhakta. He wrote hymns not only to Siva, but to Sri Krishna, the Divine Mother and to others, and his conception of Advaita was so lofty, so total, so perfect, that it enabled him to view at the same time, in its proper perspective and its proper use, the worship of the personal God.

Personal God

To my mind that worship of the personal God is something which suits an enormous majority of Westerners far better than the attempts at Advaita philosophy. As you know, in the West most people are Christians. Those who are not Christians have been born and brought up in Christian circles. The Jews are also worshippers of the personal God, and therefore, it is a thing which all our ancestry, all our preparation, all our education has made us fit to follow, with some fruit. Of course, one is tempted to ask, "If in Europe we are born and bred in it, what is the use of

going to India for it? Perhaps there is a very good reason, possibly among many others. It is that in India you have preserved an extraordinarily precise and effective technique for worship. By that I do not mean the rituals in the Pujas which have a considerable value and efficiency, but which are not for us, because each deity has appropriate Pujas, but I mean the technique of the Sadhana in the worship of any individual godhead; and this, I believe, you find, although very few people in India seem to care about it at present, in the *Puranas* and *Itihasas*.

Purpose of 'Mythology'

As you know, these scriptures as well as some small sections of the *Upanishads* and *Brahmanas* also contain a considerable amount of philosophical teachings, some theories of cosmogony and so forth, but they also contain a great number of narratives—narratives which we have called myths. 'Myth' is a word which has a very nasty association in the minds of Christians, at least. They think that the beliefs of all other religionists are myths, while their own are true. Now, these narrative portions which are looked upon sometimes as good poetry, but in all cases as totally devoid of practical spiritual value, to my mind, have considerable practical value for Yoga.

Of course, I have studied only very few of them. I do not know how many tens of thousands of them may be in the Hindu scriptures. I have studied eight or ten, that is all, so I have only studied about one in a thousand. But this study has been enough to convince me absolutely that each one of those stories, of those so-called myths, embodies a very strict, a very scientific technique for the Sadhana, for spiritual development. At first I was inclined to take from those narratives only what I thought essential—just the actual

trend of the story and to disregard as mere poetical embellishments the description of the forests and birds and plants and praises offered to the Lord and so forth, and I left them aside, thinking that I would go to the essential. But after trying with some of them I came to realize, that I was wrong and that in those narratives in the *Puranas* and *Itihasas*, there is not one single word which is not heavy with meaning and with practical teachings. I think that if you study them, you will be able to bring out the most minutely detailed technique of Yoga.

A Graphic Example

Now I shall give you just one instance of one myth which I have studied at great length. Some of you may remember in the *Maha Bharata* there is the story of a fire in the forest of Khandava. The forest of Khandava belongs to Indra, and Indra protects it against fire, because all living beings live in that forest. Agni wants to eat up that forest, or, rather he has been instructed by Brahma to go and eat it up. He goes and tries and fails, and then in order to succeed, on the advice of Brahma, he goes to Sri Krishna and to Arjuna who happened to be in the vicinity and he asks them to help him. So Sri Krishna and Arjuna agree and they secure divine weapons from the various gods. Then starts the story of the actual fight where they attack separately each one of the inhabitants of the forest. Now, if you study that story thoroughly, you will see that each one of those entities in the forest, whether birds, or fish, or trees, or semi-divine beings, represents something very specific which we have in our nature, and which we have to conquer or overcome or destroy or assimilate or of which we have to enlist the help if we want to go ahead in our Sadhana. In each one of the sectional episodes you will find that a

different method is employed. I will just give you one point

Symbolical Allusions

As I see it, the combination of Arjuna and Sri Krishna has a significance. Arjuna represents the human and Sri Krishna the Divine. While against some of the entities Arjuna acts alone and in a certain way, again Sri Krishna acts alone against others. Again, against still others Arjuna and Sri Krishna act together. This shows that along a certain path of Sadhana at least that of destroying the forest of dualities which is represented by the Khandava Vana, there is one part or some part of the work which has to be done by individual human being alone (Sadhaka), others about which he has absolutely nothing to do, but to leave them in the hands of the Divine who will do the work for him, and others again in which close co-operation of a very definite nature is required between the human and the Divine. This distribution of the task in three sections, to my mind, contains extremely important, practical hints in many Sadhanas at least.

Of course, one can learn much more from the episodes in the myth in the *Maha Bharata*. I mention this just as one in-

stance, but I believe that the same sort of study could be made of many other passages in *Puranas* and *Itihasas*. I had the privilege of discussing this point with several gatherings of Pandits and scholars in Madras, Banaras and Vrindavan, and I was glad to see that they agreed with me, and this is why I was so bold as to put this before you. I know there are many scholars and students of the scriptures in this room (Satsang Bhavan of the Sivanandashram), and I very much hope that under the wise guidance of Swami Sivananda, who knows the substance and essential of all those teachings, they will take the trouble of going into the details of some of these narrative parts of the scriptures. In this way, I believe they can help many people not only in India, but also in the West, who are ready to make practical use of those teachings. I stress the word 'practical,' because we have had enough of pure erudition, of learning for the sake of study, of which we make either no use or bad use. Many people in the West are now interested in knowing what can be of practical use in spiritual life, even as they are interested in knowing what can be of practical use in material life.

A RETREAT IN THE HIMALAYAS

Away from the din of modern cities and yet not far removed from such amenities as are necessary for comfortable living—in a modest sense—the Sivananda Nagar (near Rishikesh, Northern Railway) offers ample facilities for rest-giving holidays as well as for settling down after retirement. Here in sylvan solitude, in spiritually soothing atmosphere, on the bank of the holy Ganga, many devotees spend their holidays in undisturbed spiritual contemplation and benefit from the saintly company of Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. For this purpose they have constructed small residential quarters of their own. Anyone is welcome to do so, if one could afford. The land is provided free of cost. The construction charges for a single room come to about Rs. 2,500. For details, please write to:

The Secretary, The Divine Life Society, Sivananda Nagar, Rishikesh, U.P.

Spiritual Discipline and Social Organization

Dr. M.M. Bhattacharya, M.A., Ph.D., P.R.S.

(Head of the Department of English, Calcutta University)

Culture, in the proper sense of the term has a spiritual element. This may be supplied by religion, and very often this is the case. But it may also be derived from other sources. Imagination, poetry, comprehensive vision and deep meditation are some of these. Always culture lifts up the human mind above utilitarian considerations and the plane of the gross and concrete. It leads it from the phenomenal and ephemeral to the abiding and eternal. Even in the domain of science the progress is from observation to generalization in which imagination plays such an important part. Mechanics and technicians are incapable of this play of imagination and of the abstract speculation which make hypotheses possible.

In the sphere of the Humanities, poetry affords the greatest scope for freedom from the bondage of the concrete, of dogma and formula, of stereotyped opinion and orthodox view, because it is mainly based on imagination. Poetry is, therefore, believed to be a great emancipating force and a means of the spiritual uplift for the human soul. As Matthew Arnold remarks, poetry is coming more and more to occupy the place which religion once held, in proportion as this is being encrusted with formality and ritualism, and its spiritual sublimity, i.e., the imaginative element in it is disappearing.

Emergence of 'Spirituality'

In the history of ancient India the emergence of spirituality is clear. The ritualism of the *Samhitas* and the *Brahmanas*,—the worship of the material and concrete,—gives place, in course of time, to the pursuit of the intellectual ideal in the *Upanishads*, as expounded in the *Vedanta*.

There is also the infusion of imagination in *Upanishadic* mysticism. Finally the *Geeta* arrives at a synthesis of *Karma*, *Jnana* and *Bhakti* in its sublime and comprehensive spiritual message to mankind.

Freedom from the bondage of the petty and concrete, from the obsession of rigid theory and creed, from restricted outlook and sympathy, from narrowness of imagination are thus implied by culture. It emphasizes catholicity of mind, love of free ideas and faith in the infinite possibilities of the operation of the spirit with a readiness to work for the promotion of the highest ideal, uninfluenced by any other ulterior consideration. This is the meaning of the well-known passages of the *Geeta*.

Organizations for Promotion of Culture

Undoubtedly, the realization of this ideal is difficult, and requires strenuous efforts. These can really be fruitful if based on some system of discipline which perhaps cannot be evolved by any individual however talented he may be. It must be the outcome of social consciousness that finds expression in organizations or associations which seek to promote the good of humanity through the invocation of the spiritual.

These were very prominent in ancient and medieval times. The Academy in ancient Athens, the Christian church in medieval Europe, the *Ashram* in ancient India, the *Vihara* in Buddhist times, the *Math* of the Post-Buddhistic age, furnished the training ground for the best specimens of humanity, the humanized and spiritual beings with a soul catholic, sensitive and finely balanced and attuned to the rhythm of the Infinite. There were, in

all these, splendid systems of intellectual and spiritual discipline and rules of conduct in which were institutionalized the cultural ideals of the epochs.

Social Stratification

But it is true that the golden image had feet of clay.

The organizations for promotion of spiritual culture were based on social stratification which meant, for many, moral and intellectual degradation.

Slavery and untouchability in the lower rungs were generally found in the past in all such countries that have made remarkable contributions to knowledge and spiritual culture. But too much must not be made of this. Slavery generally was the legacy of war, and untouchability was the consequence of a sense of racial and cultural superiority. No individual law-givers or thinkers were ever responsible for their introduction anywhere. They were the products of the spirit of barbarism, of the "ape and tiger" which at one time held the mob-mind in grip all over the world, and does so on occasions even now. Evolution of spirituality has meant the gradual softening of these instincts, the dawning of light on darkness. The evils in their worst forms did not continue very long everywhere.

Slavery came, in course of time, to have its redeeming features, and relief was afforded to the untouchables, in some way or others. Bonds of obligation and affection slowly grew up between the lower and the higher classes. The deities worshipped by the former were given a place in the pantheon of the latter, and their manners and customs too were partly adopted by those who had nothing but contempt for them. Slaves were emancipated and were accorded a higher and responsible status in society.

Process of Levelling Up

The levelling that has been going on for some time past, has as its ultimate goal, what is sometimes called a classless society where privileges of birth and position will be unknown. This is still in the womb of the future, and at present, in consequence of reorientation and reorganization, we have a society where the classes are less sharply differentiated. Levelling up rather than levelling down has taken place on an extensive scale. Hence the standard of life of large masses of people has improved, and a desire for greater comforts has become evident. Political power and responsibility which were confined to a few are now claimed by many who demand education as the stepping-stone to it. What these can possibly assimilate is not spiritual culture of the highest kind which is beyond the reach of all but a few, but utilitarian education or training which will help them to live as decent folk and to shoulder the responsibilities of citizenship.

Thinkers, legislators and educationists are now busy devising means of spread of such utilitarian education and raising earning capacity of the people. The objective set before itself by a modern democracy is thus education for citizenship, education with a purpose with an ulterior objective—not really inner discipline leading to spiritual culture or human perfection.

Role of Ashramas

What, then is to become of the ideal of spiritual culture which, in India at any rate, was and is still regarded as the most cherished and treasured heritage? Who are to hold aloft its banner and work as its champions and promoters? Not certainly the universities established by the state. These are wedded to the scheme of utilitarian studies—professional and

technological training, training for citizenship for the trades and the public services. They look upon men, if not like Napoleon as food for cannon, as applicants for situations in government departments and in commercial concerns. The conception of spiritual culture or of all-round human perfection unconnected with qualification for service or profession—of profoundness as distinct from smartness, of intellectual elevation as distinct from cleverness, of ability as distinct from adroitness and sycophancy, does not appeal to them, or is beyond their comprehension. Success is their God and not Self-realization,—self-assertion, not self-abnegation for the glorification of the 'not-self.' There is even a danger that their influence may dim the glory of the past and may affect the atmosphere in institutions which are yet inspired by different aspirations and ideologies. Santiniketan has become a modern University, and the beautiful *Amlaki* groves where the poet had dreamt golden dreams and sought to live a dedicated life, will now be disturbed by the shouts of educationist-politicians and the clamour of candidates for University distinctions who have no faculty of reverence and who start with the idea of learning nothing and of using diplomas as mere stepping-stones. One wonders what will become of great centres of spiritual culture, the relics of vanished glory—of *Maths* and *Ashrams* of ancient India.

Even if they continue and are not swept away by the new gusts, will they be able to function properly? Is it likely that they will only be isolated centres of antiquated ideals, out of touch with the modern era?

Free India cannot be satisfied if they are. It is certainly to be expected that they will serve as the link between the past and the present, between the highest and the lowest in the land, and that the ancient teachings and ideals of India should infiltrate into the country through them, and bring about a spiritual renaissance among the masses.

Spiritual Aspirations

The state is the embodiment of a spiritual ideal—it reflects not only the might, the skill and the organizing genius of a people, but also its inner realization of the spiritual ideal. Just as provision has to be made by a Government for the development of a nation's material and intellectual resources and its military strength, facilities should also be offered for the fulfilment of its dreams and inner cravings—the best of which are its spiritual aspirations. These can be realized only if the treasure acquired by the greatest of men is shared in by the vast majority. Their participation will also add to it, but if they are kept aloof and deprived, it may ultimately shrink and disappear. It is, therefore, worthy of serious consideration how people in trades and professions—in mills and factories—may come in touch with the custodians and promoters of spiritual culture, how spiritual discipline may be instilled into them and how their grosser nature may be made finer. Social organizations and educational systems should be such as to uplift the whole nation to a higher plane, not merely to provide for defence or material and intellectual progress, i.e., to make it more catholic, more imaginative, finer in moral texture and outlook and in closer communion with the Infinite and the Eternal.

The aim of education is not simply to enrich the minds of people with new knowledge, but also help them to rise to their full spiritual stature. It must rouse them to the value of spiritual realities, turn their eyes from things which are merely temporal to the things which are eternal, and enable them to pursue the values which are ultimate, and not be occupied with merely utilitarian ends.

—Dr. S. Radhakrishnan

Ashram News and Notes

DANCE PERFORMANCE

Speaking at a function arranged, on 16th May, for a dance-recital by Kumari Nalini, daughter of Sri D. Srinivasan, of Paramagudi, South India, Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj said: "Nritya or dancing is an important *anga* (limb) in Bhakti Yoga. It stirs up divine emotion in the heart of the devotee, generates pure love, right mental disposition, spiritual awareness, and culminates in communion with God." Sri Swamiji Maharaj then expressed his keen appreciation of the talent of the child-artiste for her exquisite renderings of the various aspects of the *Bharatanatyam*. A student of the Pichiyya Pillai School of Dancing, Tanjore, Kumari Nalini has already won unqualified acclamation for her remarkable virtuosity in the art of dancing at a very young age, and before entering her career of public performance, she had the unique opportunity of consecrating the art at the holy feet of Swami Sivananda, on the bank of the sacred Ganga.

The programme was arranged at the instance of Sri Nagappa Chettiar, M.P., who is a regular visitor to the Ashram and is greatly interested in the spiritual mission of Sri Swamiji Maharaj.

Earlier, on 10th May, a few recitals of the *Bharatanatyam* were also given by Kumaris Leela and Veena, daughters of Sri Seshadri, of Bombay.

MUSIC RECITALS

A special three-hour programme was arranged, on 17th May, for Karnatic music by Sri Rama Iyengar, Sri G. Subramaniam, and Sri R.M. Swarnappa. This repertoire of classical music, among them some of the finest compositions of Saint Thyagaraja, was greatly appreciated by the audience present. Sri P.S. Nagarajan and Sri N.V.K. Gangadharan provided the *Mridanga* and

the violin accompaniment, respectively. Earlier, on the previous night, Sri S.P. Jayaraman had sung the background music to the dance-recital by Kumari Nalini.

On 10th May, a *Divyanama Kirtan* was conducted by Sri V. Nagarajan, of Virudhunagar, in which some of the Ashramites joined.

On 21st and 22nd May, a party of musicians from Sikandrabad, U.P., conducted Sankirtan and Bhajan after the *Kaalakshepa* style, narrating the episode, from the life stories of Sri Rama and Sri Krishna, which exalted the supreme glory of self-surrender and devotion to God.

IMPORTANCE OF SATSANGA

On 21st May, while declaring open a newly constructed Satsanga Bhavan at Lakshmanjula, Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj extolled the great importance of holy company and congregation, and explained how Satsanga was an essential means for the purification of the mind, comparing of notes, clarification of doubts, moulding of the right type of perspective towards the temporal and spiritual values, steady and repeated impact of wholesome *Samskaras* on the mind, and attainment of divine enlightenment.

SPIRITUAL TRAINING

A batch of eleven high school and college students from Patan (Gujarat) were given a farewell reception on 19th May, on the eve of their departure home after a sojourn of about a month at the Ashram, during the period of which they had learnt the practice of some of the basic Yogic exercises and enthusiastically participated in the activities of the institution. They were awarded suitable titles by Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj who stressed the need of the spiritual training of the youth while speaking at the close of the function, and

exhorted the boys to follow the path of truth, nonviolence and purity, to be kind and compassionate towards all, to learn how to adapt, adjust and accommodate, to practise self-restraint and self-culture, and to do selfless service to the needy and the suffering.

BUDDHA PARINIRVANA JAYANTI

The Buddha Parinirvana Jayanti was celebrated at the Sivanandashram on a grand scale on 24th May. The celebrations were divided into three sessions, in the morning, afternoon and at night, when special prayer services were held, scriptures containing the teachings of Lord Buddha were read, and discourses on his great life and the glorious ethical and spiritual message he gave to humanity for all times to come, were given by different speakers.

The Ashram celebrated the Shantara Jayanti on 15th May, and observed the Chandragrahana Vrata on 24th May.

TITLE AWARDS

The following were among those who received the titles mentioned hereunder from Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, during the month of May :

Karma Yogi Veer : Hasmukh Adhvar-yoo, and Mansukh M. Swami,

Bhakti Ratna : Vinod Adhvaryoo, Jayanti Khatrī, Prasanna Majumdar, and Jayendra K. S. D.

Sadhana Ratna : Chimansingh Rathod, Arun Kumar Vyas, and Madhuban Shah,

Sraddha Ratna : Hasmukh Adhvar-yoo, Mahesh Shah, and Popatlal Joshi,

Chitrakala Kushala : Mansukh Swami, and Arun Kumar Vyas,

Sangita Ratna : Mansukh Swami, Lala Devi Sharan, and N.V.K. Gangadharan,

Sangita Jyoti : Pandit Shankar Lal, Rama Iyengar, G. Subramaniam, and R.M. Swarnappa,

Gana Sudhakara : S.P. Jayaraman

Sankirtan Jyoti : V. Nagarajan

Sankirtan Ratna : Prithvi Singh

Mridanga Jyoti : P.S. Nagarajan

Tabla Jyoti : Pandit Shankar Lal

Nrityakalanidhi : Nalini, of Paramagudi, and Veena and Leela, of Bombay.

VISITING ASPIRANTS AND OTHER VISITORS

The following were among those who visited the Ashram during the month of May :

Bhikkhu W. Obhosa, Bangkok; Mrs. Sambasiva Rao, Madras; Sri Donald A. Miller, New York; Dr. Jagmohan Singh, M.B.B.S., and Mrs. Pritam Kaur, M.B.B.S., Dehra Dun; Sri Karl Christiansen, a German journalist stationed at Delhi, and Mrs. Christiansen; Dr. Indra Sen, M.A., Ph.D., Editor, *Aditi*, Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry; Col. M.K. Rao, New Delhi and Mrs. Rao; Sri A.K. Sinha, retired Inspector-General of Police, Bihar, and Mrs. Sinha; Sir Madhavan Nair, a former member of the Privy Council, London, and Lady Nair; Srimati Draupadi Chandrabhan, Trinidad; Sri Tirukkural Muniswami, M.P., and Sri Nagappa Chettiar, M.P., Madras; Srimati Jaduyca Gikeitis, Australia; Sri Santhanam, Chairman, Finance Commission, Government of India; Sri H.V.R. Iyengar, I.C.S., Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industries, New Delhi; Sri Justice Srinivasachari, High Court, Hyderabad; Major-General Mahadeo Singh, Adjutant-General, Indian Army; Principal Shiv Raj, of the Roorkee Engineering University; Srimati Sivananda-Vapi, Delhi, and Sri R.R. Tiwari, Advocate, Gwalior.

On 7th May, Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj received a batch of ten students of the Darrang College, Tezpur, Assam, to to whom he imparted his usual ethical and spiritual instructions.

During the first week of May, Sri Swamiji Maharaj gave his blessing in consecration of the *Mundan* ceremony of the two sons of Sri G. Muthukrishna Naidu, Secretary, Divine Life Society Branch, Okkili-patti, South India.

SIVANANDA SCOUTS AND SPORTS CLUB

Sri T. Dorairaj, a teacher of the Kshatriya Vidyasala, Virudhunagar, South India, has founded a Sivananda Scouts and Sports Club with the object of inculcating the spirit of ethical discipline and public service as well as for imparting the science of health-culture among the youth, as per the teachings of Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj.

PLEASE NOTE

Sri Swami Satyanandaji, till lately Editor of "Yoga-Vedant" (the Hindi monthly Journal of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University), has left the Sivanandashram. His connections with the Divine Life Society have been severed. He no longer represents the Society or H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj in any manner whatsoever.

P.O. Sivananda Nagar }
6th May, 1956

Secretary,
The Divine Life Society.

NATUROPATHS TO NOTE

Applications are invited from competent Naturopaths to serve at Sivananda Nagar, Rishikesh, as Director of Sivananda Nature Cure Sanatorium, in honorary capacity. The applicants are requested to furnish the details of their qualification and age. Adequate English knowledge to deal with correspondence is essential; type-writing qualification preferable. The Ashram will provide lodging and boarding free of charge to the Director, but he should have no dependents to be supported here. Please apply to :

The Secretary, Divine Life Society, P.O. Sivananda Nagar, Rishikesh, U.P.

AYURVEDIC MEDICINES AND TONICS

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 1. Pure Shilajit (tonic, blood-purifier) | Per Tola Re. 1-8 |
| 2. Chyavanprash (tonic, nutrient) | Rs. 2-10, 5-4 and 10-8 |
| 3. Chandra Prabha (for debility urinary and other complaints) | Per Tola Rs. 2-2 |
| 4. Brahmi-Amla Medicated Oil (cooling hair oil) | Rs. 2-0 and 4-0 |
| 5. Vasanta Kusumakar (general nervine tonic) | Per Masha Rs. 3-12 |
| 6. Brahmi Vilas Choorna (for cough and cold) | As. 0-8-0 and Re. 1-0 |
| 7. Brahmacharya Sudha (for spermatorrhoea) | Re. 1-0 and Rs. 2-0 |
| 8. B. M. K. Trichoorna (for cough and cold) | As. 0-8-0 and Re. 1-0 |
| 9. Brahmi Leaves (brain tonic, cooling agent) | Re. 1-0 |
| 10. Danta Raksha Tooth-powder (a cleansing, medicinal agent) | As. 0-8-0 and Rs. 1-0 |
| 11. Pada Raksha Malam (fissure-foot ointment) | As. 0-8-0 and Re. 1-0 |
| 12. Chandrakanti Lepam (for boils) | Re. 1-2 and Rs. 2-4 |
| 13. Dashamoolarishta (for digestive and liver complaints) | Rs. 3-2 |
| 14. Ashokarishta (for gynecic complaints) | Rs. 2-12 |
| 15. Cureczema (for eczema and general skin diseases) | Rs. 2-8 |
| 16. Kshudha Vardhak Choorna (appetizer and digestive agent) | As. 0-8-0 and Re. 1-0 |
| 17. Balajivanamrita (tonic for children) | Re. 1-12 |
| 18. Madhumeha Nivarak (for diabetes) | Rs. 2-8 and Rs. 5-0 |
| 19. Pure Himalayan Honey (nutritious sweetening agent) | Per lb. Rs. 3-0 |
| 20. Arjunarishta (for ailments of heart, lung, etc., and purification of blood) | Rs. 2-12 |
| 21. Brahmi Sharbat (for cooling the system ; a refreshing drink) | Rs. 3-4 |
| 22. Netra Jyoti Surma (for external eye diseases) | As. 0-12-0 and Re. 1-8 |
| 23. Maha Yogaraj Gugulu (for neuralgic diseases and nervous debility) | Rs. 2-8 |
| 24. Triphala Powder (for purification of blood) | Per lb. Rs. 3-0 |

For full particulars and medical guidance please write to :

*The Sivananda Ayurvedic Pharmaceutical Works,
P.O. Sivananda Nagar, Rishikesh (Himalayas)*

ATI-RUDRA MAHA YAJNA

The Fourth Ati-Rudra Maha Yajna will be conducted at the Vishwanath Mandir, Sivanandanagar, on 18th June, 1956. It may be recalled that daily Rudra Parayanas are being done at the Temple for general welfare of all humanity and universal peace, as well as for the health, long life, peace and prosperity of individual devotees (on request) since many years past. Ati-Rudra Maha Yajnas, held periodically, mark the completion of a fixed number of Parayanas, following which sacred *Kalasa* water and Prasad are sent to those on whose behalf worship had been offered. Worship is also offered for the peace of the departed souls, on request by their relations, on these occasions. Those who wish to participate personally or by proxy in the Fourth Ati-Rudra Maha Yajna may please contact the Secretary, Divine Life Society, P.O. Sivanandanagar, Rishikesh, U.P.

FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS TO NOTE

All associates of the Divine Life Society residing outside India and all those who are in touch with Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj from abroad are requested to note that no remittance of money should be made by currency note through post, either for buying books, or as donation, or as subscription to any of the Society's periodicals. Money should generally be remitted through banks which are represented in India directly or indirectly. Small amounts such as for reply postage or towards the subscription of a periodical may be sent by International Postal Coupons, or in case of the Commonwealth countries and the British administered territories, by British Postal Orders.

The Secretary, The Divine Life Society, P.O. Sivananda Nagar, Rishikesh, U.P.

For the Health and Long Life of Sri Sivanandaji Maharaj

Ardent devotees of Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj have frequently suggested that Sri Swamiji should go over to some hill-stations to avoid the summer-heat of Rishikesh. It is well-known that Sri Swamiji rates service above self, and that he smilingly turns down all such suggestions and continues his dynamic service of humanity from Rishikesh itself.

At the instance of these devotees, an AIR CONDITIONER is being installed in Sri Swamiji's Kutir itself, at an approximate cost of Rs. 3,000. Regarding this,

Sri T. S. Sitapati, Chartered Electrical Engineer, Calcutta, writes: "I fully endorse your anxiety not to let Sri Gurudev's health be affected by the summer heat of Rishikesh. I got in touch with Messrs. Voltas Ltd., the leading people to provide Air Conditioners. They have got very compact Room Cooler Units."

When installed, the Air Conditioner will give Sri Swamiji Maharaj, the Hill Station comfort in his own Kutir on the bank of the Ganges. Devotees, disciples and admirers of Sri Swamiji Maharaj have a wonderful opportunity of contributing their share towards this great service of the Master. Long Live Sri Gurudev!

P. O. Sivananda Nagar,
15th May, 1956.

Secretary,
Divine Life Society.